

EDA FUNDING

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, for over a week the Senate has been debating the Economic Development and Revitalization Act of 2011, which would reauthorize funding for existing programs of the Commerce Department's U.S. Economic Development Administration through 2015. EDA has traditionally been noncontroversial, traditionally been a bipartisan job-creation bill supported by Presidents of both parties, often supported in this body without dissent. It helps broker deals between the public and private sectors, which is critical to our economic recovery and growth. It is particularly important to economically distressed communities, particularly in tough economic times.

Every \$1 in EDA grant funding leverages nearly \$7 worth of private investment. Every \$10,000 in EDA investment in business incubators—or accelerators, as some call them—helps entrepreneurs start up companies in which nearly 70 jobs are created.

In Ohio—and I don't think it is much different in the Presiding Officer's State of Colorado—we have seen since 2006 that some 40 EDA grants worth \$36 million have leveraged a total of more than \$87 million since private resources were matched. Colleges and universities, from Bowling Green in northwest Ohio, to Ohio University in southeast Ohio, to Miami University in southwest Ohio, have received EDA funds. So, too, have port authorities in Toledo in the west and Ashtabula in the far northeast and entrepreneurs in Cleveland and Appalachia.

If we are to strengthen our competitiveness, we will need to equip businesses with the tools they need to thrive. That is what EDA is designed to do. It is the front door for communities facing sudden and severe economic distress. When economic disaster hits, communities turn to the government, and it is EDA that does the job at low cost, leveraging all kinds of private dollars.

EDA has helped redevelop the former GM plant in Moraine, OH, near Dayton, and the DHL plant in Wilmington. Ashtabula's Plant C received EDA investments to make vital repairs.

The bill the Senate is considering would strengthen a proven job-creating program. It would reduce regulatory burdens to increase flexibility for grantees. It would encourage public-private partnerships that we have already seen make a difference in my State. And the bill would better streamline EDA cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies to better assist communities with local economic development.

I plan to offer two amendments to further strengthen EDA. One would assist communities when a plant closure or downsizing causes economic distress, such as Wilmington or Moraine. The amendment gives special preference to auto communities. The other amendment would make more Ohio

communities eligible to receive funds for business incubators. Ohio is home to the National Business Incubator Association in Athens, OH, and several model business incubators, from Toledo, to Shaker Heights, to Youngstown. This amendment would allow more companies in Ohio and more communities in Ohio to support home-grown entrepreneurship.

Two weeks ago, I visited—as I have in several places around the State—an incubator in Shaker Heights called the Launch House. It was an old car dealership that had been closed down several years ago. It was renovated with relatively little money. It is now home to about 40 entrepreneurs, one- and two-person startup operations, with the average age of these young entrepreneurs being under 30. The great majority of these 35 or 40 entrepreneurs are themselves under 30. Some of these startups won't exist in 2 years. Some will have grown in 2 years. Many will be hiring lots of people in the years ahead. Some will fail, some will succeed.

As I pointed out earlier, only \$10,000 of EDA investment in a business incubator, on average, creates somewhere in the vicinity of 50, 60, or 70 jobs. If we want to promote an economy fueled by innovation, we must better equip our entrepreneurs with the resources they need to turn an idea in the lab to a product in the market.

Earlier this year, I held an innovation roundtable at Battelle with leading Ohio entrepreneurs and business leaders where we discussed the need to strengthen workforce development, promote business entrepreneurship, and support city planning. EDA assistance, they told me—as do other business leaders around the State and as entrepreneurs do tell—is critical to these goals.

This is legislation on which we should move forward. I am sorry my friends on the other side of the aisle who have been so supportive of EDA in the past—as it has always been bipartisan—seem to be standing in the way of this. It is important to move forward, so I ask for the Senate's support.

JOB CREATION

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an amendment to the Economic Development Revitalization Act of 2011. In February of this year I introduced a 7-Point Jobs Plan aimed at creating jobs, investing in education and training, assisting small businesses, reinvigorating American manufacturing, and eliminating bureaucratic redtape. Among other things, my bill aims to provide EDA assistance for areas hit hard by job losses, and specifically those communities harmed as a direct consequence of the Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, process. The amendment that I am offering today would build on this plan by making it easier for communities affected by the BRAC process to access Federal funding to further their economic de-

velopment goals and to recover from the loss of jobs.

Currently, most Economic Development Administration, EDA, projects are subject to a 50-percent match; however, the EDA is allowed to increase the Federal share—up to 80 percent—based on the relative need of the area in which the project will be located. The bill being debated would expand the list of circumstances under which the Federal share may be increased. My amendment would simply clarify that communities affected by “military base closures, realignments, or mission growth” are among those eligible for a reduced local cost share.

Maine has lost more than 5,000 military and civilian jobs as a result of the unfortunate decision to close Brunswick Naval Air Station. Several other States face similar or even greater losses. The BRAC recommendations, released by the Pentagon in May of 2005, caused Maine and many other States to face a daunting task. All of us across the State and region—political leaders, business leaders, and individual citizens from cities and small towns—worked together to build strong arguments for our bases. While we did have some great success, Maine has suffered a terrible blow with the closing of the Brunswick Naval Air Station. Nevertheless, the State and region's leaders have worked together to ensure that the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station was accompanied by a commitment to the economic redevelopment of the base in order to lessen the impact of its closure on the entire midcoast region.

The large numbers of workers in Maine, and around the Nation, who have been or will be displaced as a result of a base closure deserve to have access to necessary resources, including job training and job placement services. The EDA, with its mission to promote economic development and stability, should be leveraging taxpayer dollars to assist these struggling communities as we work to lead America to a recovery from the worst economic recession since the Great Depression.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we be in a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each, for debate only, until 7:30 today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my honor to come to the Senate floor this evening to speak on the issue of the DREAM Act and to have among those in attendance on the floor of the Senate a group of Senators from Mexico who are part of the Mexican-American interparliamentary union. They are here on the floor with the majority leader, HARRY REID, as well as Senator TOM UDALL, who is coordinating their visit to the United States over the next several days. We are honored that they are here and that they are allowed to come on the floor and to witness our Senate, at least in this proceeding where I will make a brief statement.

The issue I am going to raise in the course of this evening is one that is of importance to many people around the world—certainly in the United States and certainly in the nation of Mexico.

Ten years ago, I introduced a bill known as the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was an effort to put into the law an opportunity for young people who were brought to the United States and are undocumented to have a chance to become legal in the United States.

The first person brought to my attention was a young woman in Chicago, IL, who was Korean. She came to the United States at the age of 2. She was an accomplished musician. She had been accepted at the very best music schools in America, including Juilliard School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music.

As she filled out her application form, she asked her mother about her nationality and citizenship. Her mother told her: I am sorry, I don't know the answer because we never filed any papers. We brought you here as a baby and you have lived here all your life, but we don't know what your status is.

She said: What should we do?

Her mom said: We should call Durbin's office.

So they called my office, and we checked on the laws in America, and unfortunately the laws did not allow her to be treated as a legal person in the United States. In fact, the American law said she had to return to the country she came from, which coincidentally was Brazil, not Korea. She had

no way of knowing that. Her family had gone from Korea to Brazil to the United States. There she was at the age of 18 with a great opportunity ahead of her and no country. She had lived for 16 years in the United States. She believed she was an American. She knew no other country. She got up every day in school and said the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the national anthem. Yet she was a person without a country.

Well, it was because of her that I introduced the DREAM Act 10 years ago. What it basically says is that many young people who are brought to the United States as children should not be punished because their parents didn't file the necessary papers. The DREAM Act would give these students a chance to become legal in America. They would have to first prove they came here as a child, they are long-term U.S. residents, they have good moral character, graduate from high school, and be prepared to do one of two things: either serve in the U.S. military or complete at least 2 years of college.

So I introduced this bill 10 years ago thinking it was a simple matter of justice that these young people would have their chance. I had no idea how many young people were affected or would be affected. As I went around the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois and spoke at gatherings about the DREAM Act, it wasn't unusual for young people to be waiting for me outside afterward, and they would say very quietly: I am one of those DREAM Act kids. I was brought here, and I am undocumented, and I don't know what I am going to do with my life. They would be very quiet about it. I would say: Well, I will do my best to pass this law.

As time passed and we tried to bring this to the floor many times, things changed some. We picked up support from a lot of different people.

The Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, supports the DREAM Act. He called me one day and said: As the former president of Texas A&M, I know what it means to have college students who cannot attend an away game for any sports because they are undocumented, and if they were stopped and asked to produce identification, they could be deported. As Secretary of Defense, I know what it would mean if we could bring these young people into the American military. There would be more diversity. We would be a stronger nation, so I support it.

GEN Colin L. Powell also has endorsed the DREAM Act. He believes, as I do, that this is a fair thing to do, a just thing to do, and would be good for our military.

Over the years, these young people started coming forward more and more and speaking about their lives, and, perhaps with more bravado than they should have, they were prepared to risk deportation to tell their stories. Over the years, these Dreamers have become an important part of this effort to pass

the DREAM Act. We have the support of so many groups across America, including religious groups and many others who believe this is the right and fair thing to do. We invite young people across America, if they want to voluntarily do so, to tell us their stories.

I come to the floor of the Senate tonight to tell two stories about two young DREAM Act people and their lives.

The first one is Juan Rios. This is a photograph of Juan Rios, who was brought to the United States when he was 10 years old. He grew up in the State of Arizona. In high school, Juan discovered his calling: military service. He became a leader in the Air Force Junior ROTC, as we can see from his uniform. He became group commander and arm drill team captain and rose to the rank of cadet lieutenant colonel. Juan dreamed of one day attending the Air Force Academy, but he was unable to do so because he is undocumented. Instead, Juan enrolled in Arizona State University.

This is a more recent photograph of Juan on his commencement day at Arizona State University. Juan graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in aeronautical engineering. Since graduation, Juan has been waiting for his chance to either serve in our military or to use his degree. He can't enlist, obviously, because he is undocumented, and he can't work in his field—the aeronautics industry—because of the same legal obstacle.

He just sent me a letter, and this is what it said:

The United States of America is the country I want to live my life in, where I want to flourish as a productive citizen, where I want to grow old among my lifelong friends, where I want to one day fall in love and raise a family.

What we heard from Juan we could hear from young people all across America. It is his American dream—a dream that won't come true unless we pass the DREAM Act.

This next young lady I wish to introduce my colleagues to is someone I met just a few weeks ago. This is Tolu Olubummi. She was brought to the United States from Nigeria when she was a child. She graduated from high school here in the United States at the top of her class. She won a full scholarship to a prestigious university in Virginia and in 2002 graduated with a degree in chemical engineering.

It has been 10 years since I first introduced the DREAM Act in 2001 and almost 10 years since she graduated from college. The DREAM Act has yet to become law, and she has yet to work 1 day as a chemical engineer because she is undocumented. Instead, Tolu has dedicated her life to passing the DREAM Act for her benefit and the benefit of others. For years, she has worked as a full-time volunteer. Recently, she wrote me a letter, and this is what she said:

I don't have a powerful organization behind me or a fancy job title or even a paycheck, but I am committed to stand and fight for you for as long as you ask me to.